

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE

This zine is part of a series of footnote zines to the project “Memetic Engines of Anticapitalism.” Due to a whole lot of complications (mainly involving chronic illness) the version of this zine is at some stage of draft, not the polished and complete edition.

All of these zines will be available for free online and in perpetuity when they're finished, and updated regularly in the meantime.

If you want to follow up, the QR code on the front of this zine will take you straight to the most recent web page edition and an archive of each iteration that was separately published.

For more general updates and information on the whole project, this QR code will take you straight to memeticengines.com, where you can see the overview and any news about the works, sign up for the mailing list, or get in touch with me to ask clarifying questions.

ZINES IN THE SERIES:

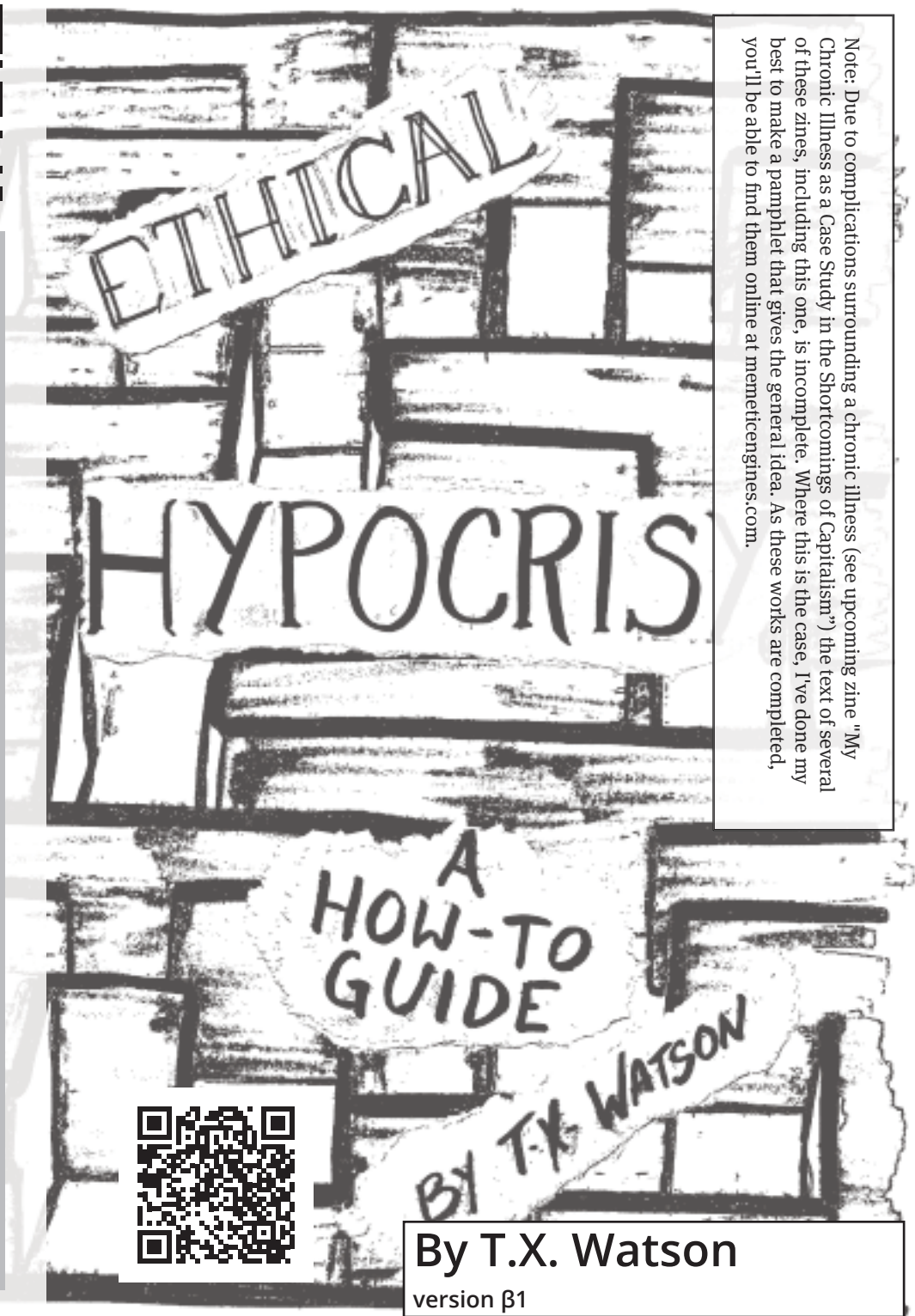
- Replicate, Mutate, Select
- The Memetic Landscape
- This Is Propaganda
- Ethical Hypocrisy
- Little Ideas in Memetics
- Capital's Not Capitalism
- What Are Pacta
- Some other awful things that are inevitable under capitalism
- The Third Derivative of Value
- This Is George
- Self-Destruct, LLC.

AND COMING SOON,

- My Chronic Illness as a Case Study in the Shortcomings of Capitalism



MEMETICENGINES.COM



Note: Due to complications surrounding a chronic illness (see upcoming zine “My Chronic Illness as a Case Study in the Shortcomings of Capitalism”) the text of several of these zines, including this one, is incomplete. Where this is the case, I've done my best to make a pamphlet that gives the general idea. As these works are completed, you'll be able to find them online at memeticengines.com.

By T.X. Watson

version β1

Ethical Hypocrisy: A How-To Guide

The puritanical notion that the moral value of a task is proportional to its difficulty encourages us to believe that as long as we're doing something difficult, we're contributing. But often the most difficult thing to do is walk headfirst into a wall, when it would be both easier to go around and overwhelmingly more likely to get you to the other side.

We need to remember that systems of oppression are adversarial: not just a brick wall, they're a maze. They intentionally put walls in the way of a straight line to a world beyond oppression. They're always going to. And the thing about solving a maze is that you almost always have to go backwards to find a functional way through the maze.

Taking this approach, you're gonna fuck up. You'll walk down dead-end pathways. When you do so, the thing to do is shrug, say you were wrong, and back up. The thing NOT to do is double down on your dead-end path.

You won't be immune to criticism, even from your peers. Even from people you admire. If you're actually looking for a way out, you should be getting pushback -- criticism isn't proof that you're doing something right, but no-criticism is proof that you're doing nothing.

“Exploitation of Ethics Systems”

Liberal philosophy calls for a systematic, definable approach to morality. The theory is that there should be some explicit set of rules that, applied without prejudice, will naturally generate morally preferable outcomes.

The problem is, whenever there's a nameable system of rules, it's possible to exploit those rules -- to act in accordance with their precise execution in a manner that undermines the spirit in which the rules were set. The Columbia Law Review's article on uncivil obedience provides a great deal of detail on the phenomenon -- or, if you prefer, the subreddit “/r/MaliciousCompliance” is a repository of users' creative solutions to the

problem of doing what they're asked.¹

A specific case of this problem with Liberal ideology was identified by Sir Karl Raimund Popper in his 1945 book “The Open Society and its Enemies, Vol. 1,” wherein he described the “Paradox of tolerance”:

If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.²

Exploiting the principle of unlimited tolerance is a standard practice among groups whose ideologies are rooted in doing harm. For example, both NAMBLA and 4Chan's “Clovergenger” hoax provide examples of groups attempting to use the progressive social norm of prioritizing people's right to self-identify as a strategy for defending child sexual abuse.³

1 Jessica Bulman-Pozen and David E. Pozen, “Uncivil Disobedience,” in Columbia Law Review 155 no. 4. <http://columbialawreview.org/content/uncivil-obedience-2>; “/r/Malicious Compliance” subreddit, reddit.com. <https://www.reddit.com/r/MaliciousCompliance>.

2 Karl Raimund Popper, Open Society and Its Enemies, Volume 1: The Spell of Plato. London: Routledge, 1945.

3 Kim LaCapria “Are People Identifying as ‘Clovergenger?’” snopes.com. January 6, 2017. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/are-people-identifying-as-clovergenger>.